

January 1985
No. 86

What's Inside?

Cocktail Party (see back cover)
1171 Sansome
Sports Arena
Financial Institutions



TELEGRAPH HILL SEMAPHORE

Publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers

President's Message

As office space in the Financial District becomes more expensive, businesses are looking towards North Beach's upper story residential units for conversion into office space. Financial institutions have taken over ground space formerly occupied by grocery stores, clothing emporiums, and florists (see story inside).

Several years ago, the Telegraph Hill Dwellers initiated interim zoning controls for North Beach, seeking to preserve its supply of housing units and neighborhood-serving businesses. Now, working with the Planning Department, we're designing permanent zoning controls for the North Beach Neighborhood Commercial Use District, an area covering roughly 20 blocks.

With the assistance of a planning consultant*, we've made comments and recommendations to the Planning Department related to parking, square footage per establishment (to maintain the "scale" of the businesses), financial institutions, conversion of second and third floor residential units, height (lowering limits to 40 feet), and historic significance.

We've been pleased with the city's current interest and involvement in the preservation of North Beach's neighborhood and its small businesses. We hope their cooperation and support for our concerns will continue through the completion of the rezoning process, and its implementation in the future.

*Planning consultant Michael Tripp was hired with grants from the Gerbode and San Francisco Foundations, with assistance from the Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage.

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Vice President	*Judy Robinson.....	562B Lombard	982-8533
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		448 Greenwich	781-4352

MEMBERS: Please call these chairs and volunteer to serve today!

Financial Institutions Beware!

An item in Herb Caen's column on December 9 and a front-page story in the January 2 *Chronicle*, along with the phone calls to Supervisors that it generated, all contributed to our success at the January 3 Board of Supervisors' meeting. At that time, the Supervisors unanimously voted to extend our current moratorium on financial institutions in North Beach for one more year.

There are currently six savings and loans near the intersection of Columbus, Green, and Stockton. Recently the Planning Commission permitted a branch of Sincere Savings and Loan at 228 Columbus—one-half block out of our moratorium area. There is also a new Savings and Loan at Chestnut and Columbus, and there have been inquiries from First Nationwide Savings and Loan to put in a branch at Columbus and Lombard, at the recently vacated Kentucky Fried Chicken site. This is 20 feet outside our moratorium area, which extends several blocks east and west of Columbus, from Broadway to Lombard.

We are closely watching 1318 Stockton, site of a proposed branch of Golden Coin Savings and Loan. If this branch does materialize, we will make every effort to have it removed, since it is within the boundaries covered by our moratorium.

Our thanks go to Supervisor Molinari for his initiation of the moratorium legislation, Supervisor Kopp for his impassioned plea to the supervisors in favor of neighborhood-serving businesses, all the supervisors for their support, and to Mayor Feinstein for the signing ceremony in her office on January 12.



INTERSECTION

FOR THE ARTS

SPRING 1984 PERFORMANCE

January 27—February 25

Nightfire Theatre's
"Beauty Science"

February 29—March 17

"The Ballad of Johnny & Abduhl"
a new play with music & video
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March 21—April 1

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GALLERY

February 10—March 25

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Mark Roller, painting & drawing
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Supervisors Protect Sightseeing Helicopters Instead of Neighborhoods

Commodore Helicopters' application for a BCDC permit at Pier 43 revealed the amazing fact that they had operated all these years *without a city permit!* At their meeting of Oct. 13, attended by 14 opposing neighborhood leaders, the Planning Commission denied Commodore's belated permit application 5-1. Although an EIR would have been required before approving a permit, none was required by law for disapproval. The Planning Commission ruled that a heliport at Pier 43 is contrary to the City's Masterplan and is detrimental to the health, safety, convenience and general welfare of persons residing or working in the vicinity.

Commodore appealed to the Board of Supervisors who were advised by the City Attorney that they could not legally overrule the Planning Commission because the Masterplan does not allow for a heliport in this location. Heavily lobbied by the applicant, a large contingent of helicopter employees and trade organizations and the Fisherman's Wharf Association, the majority of the Board, vigorously led by Supervisors Silver and Kopp, found a way around the City Attorney's ruling by granting a continuance of 7 months and requesting an EIR.

One of the more grotesque moments of the lengthy hearing came when a "noise abatement" police officer, called upon by the applicant's attorney and gently guided in his testimony by the Board President, declared that the helicopters were barely audible! Even more shocking was a letter from the applicant's lawyer, declaring that Article 18 of the

Port's lease with Commodore (stipulating that a failure to abide by any law or ordinance imposed on the premises constitutes a violation of the lease) was merely a boiler plate provision".

By granting a 7-month delay (plus more unavoidable delays to follow), eight Supervisors condemned the residents and property owners of the neighborhoods to suffer the continued unauthorized noise pollution for an indefinite period—for the benefit of *one* enterprise! Among the many organizations seeking relief were the following: Telegraph Hill, Russian Hill, Marina, Nob Hill, Recreation & Park Dept., People For Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service (Balclutha), Maritime Museum, San Francisco Tomorrow, Sierra Club Bay Chapter, Coalition For San Francisco Neighborhoods and innumerable property owners and residents.

Our thanks to the three Supervisors who voted to protect the neighborhoods and to uphold the Planning Commission: Harry Britt, John Molinari and Louise Renne.

Stray Cats

Stray cats don't have a very good chance at life. Many are born ill and blind. Also people can be cruel to them.

If you are interested in helping to curb this situation, please contact me. I know a humane way to help these animals. Call Elena Alfieri: (h) 421-1261, (w) 393-0394 or "PET EXPRESS"—they too can give good advice: 822-7111.

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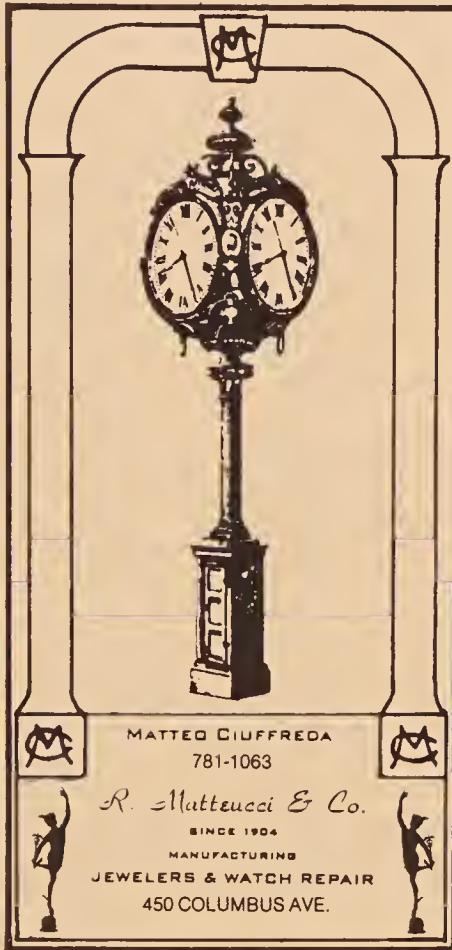


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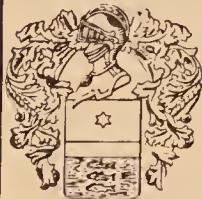


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Sports Arena In Conflict With Masterplan

For nearly a decade, the THD participated actively in the three successive Citizens Advisory Committees which produced the BCDC Plan, the San Francisco NE Waterfront Plan, and a Redevelopment Plan for the area between the Ferry Building and China Basin. A viable and promising consensus was achieved, balancing maritime activities, business, recreation, open space and badly needed housing. Progressing from the planning stage to actual implementation, the Redevelopment project with 1,700 housing units, an adjacent 5-7 acre waterfront park and a 700 boat marina had attracted concrete developer commitments. Recently a vital part of the site was proposed for a domed Sports Arena. This structure, 200 ft. high in a 40 ft. height area, would displace the proposed park, and seriously limit the badly needed housing; plans for the proposed stadium disregard the approved masterplan, the McAtee-Petris Act (BCDC) and the Redevelopment Plan, previously approved by the Supervisors and the Mayor.

When Proposition M lost by the narrowest of margins, everyone agreed that its call for adherence to Masterplans found vigorous voter support. Without taking a position on the merits of a domed Sports Arena for San Francisco, the THD passed a resolution urging the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission to keep the China Basin Redevelopment Area protected according to the mandate of the Masterplan and to focus studies on more suitable areas.

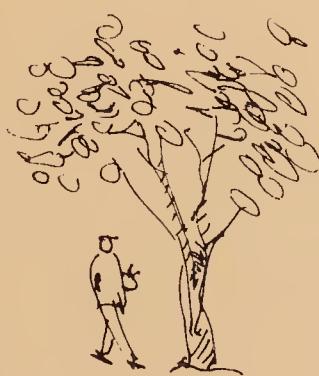
In Memoriam Charles Shearer

Charles "Chuck" Shearer died quietly of a heart attack, leaving behind many friends who will miss this gentle man. Chuck was a neighborhood character, the Mayor of Napier Lane, such a source of local lore he resembled a "town crier". He told colorful stories of the old "gin parties" on Napier Lane and was full of Pennsylvania aphorisms like "You lie faster than a horse can trot." He was a good neighbor, always the first to offer assistance in any emergency, willingly driving sick friends to the hospital, a cat to the vet, or running out to get prescriptions.

Chuck moved to Napier Lane in 1953 and over the years could regularly be found at the U.S. Restaurant (which he fondly called "Busta Gut").

He was a charter member of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, a regular at their meetings and parties, and although he wasn't outspoken, he was very involved.

Simply by his presence in the neighborhood he affected us all, and those of us who were accustomed to seeing him on his daily walks will miss him tremendously. His passing has taken some spark and charm out of our lives.



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Crime Report

The meetings hosted by the Central District of the city Police Department District are now being held at Central Station every month, rather than every other month, as was the case until recently. Previously, the meeting would be held at a different location, often one of the hotels in the Tenderloin. Due to the enthusiastic response of the public, Captain Willis Casey of Central decided to hold meeting at both Central Station (766 Vallejo) and in the Tenderloin area on a monthly basis. The Central Station meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at 8 p.m. and last no more than an hour. A typical agenda includes a talk by a police officer or other guest followed by a free-swinging question and answer period. Refreshments follow.

The January 19th meeting addressed the problems of parking in the North Beach/ Telegraph hill area. The two dozen or so attendees fired several pointed questions concerning double parking, cars parked in driveways but blocking the sidewalk, alley parking, and, of course, meter maids! One of the speakers passed on the useful information that there are temporary "A" stickers available for a week or two at a time.

The meeting also marked Willis Casey's first anniversary as police captain at Central. Casey numbered among his accomplishments: reorganizing foot beats to make them more responsive to calls, greater protection for the elderly in the Tenderloin area, the assignment of Chinese-speaking officers to Chinatown during the day shift, personal contact by two officers with the residents of the Bay Street projects, which reduced crime

significantly, and the reduction of prostitution in the Union Street area. Captain Casey also went over the crime statistics for the Central District for the eleven months through November, 1983. These statistics are broken down into categories of: homicide, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, grand theft, auto theft, and other. Although the crime rate is down over last year, the captain pointed out that this could be due to a smaller group of young people in the district, who committ a proportionately greater amount of crime than other age groups.

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers' crime committee is following up on statistics for our area. Through October, 1983 (10 months only) over 1400 different incidents of crime were committed. Although Telegraph Hill is one of the safer parts of the city, there is obviously still a lot of crime in absolute terms. Anyone interested in the details of the crime statistics, or in helping out with the street patrol, should contact Tom Havey at 391-5524 (529 Vallejo St.). There is also a need for one or two more people to help schedule the regular walks.

Photography Show Features Spaghetti Factory Gang

Jean Dierkes Carlisle is having a show of her photography at the North Beach Branch of the San Francisco Public Library, Mason/Columbus Avenue, from February 29, 1984 to March 31, 1984. There will be a reception and slide show at the library Wednesday evening, February 29, 1984, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.

The theme will be "A Tribute to Freddie Kuh and the Spaghetti Factory Gang."

Jean, a native San Franciscan, is also a freelance writer, actress, and artist's model. Her work is exhibited, published, and collected worldwide.



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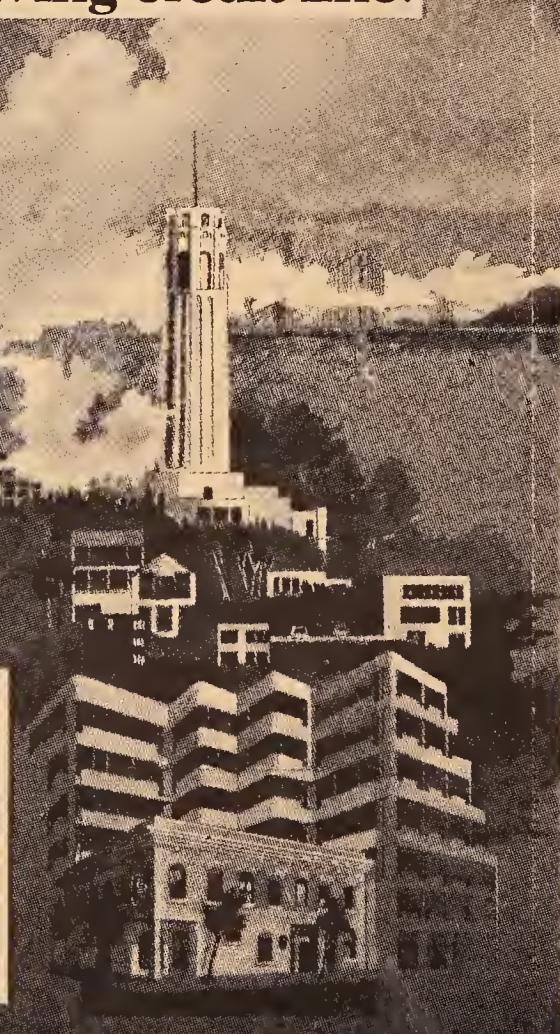
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Letterwriting

- Send a short and clear letter to the responsible individual.
- Use your own words on your own stationery.
- Identify the issue and/or legislation by title and number.
- State the reason for your position; state how the issue would affect you, your neighborhood, your community, your city.
- Be reasonable and constructive. Avoid threats.
- Praise action which pleases you.
- Addresses are included in this pamphlet. Use personal names rather than merely addressing titles.

ADDRESS FOR ALL SUPERVISORS:

Room 235, City Hall, SF, CA 94102

Phoning

- Organize your thoughts and check your facts before dialing. Phone numbers are included in this pamphlet.
- Briefly state your reason for calling to the person who answers so that you can be sure that you're talking to the right person before explaining your position on a matter.
- Be polite and be patient if you're transferred a number of times.

Testifying

- Keep the presentation short without omitting relevant information.
- Identify the interest being represented.
- Do not threaten.
- Be factual and have documentation readily available.
- Use an articulate, calm, and informed spokesperson.
- Provide copies of the testimony to all members of the body and have copies available for the press.

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San Francisco 94102
558-3456

Incredible Shrinking Highrise

The proposed office-condo project at 1171 Sansome began at 12 stories and 136 feet. In November it shrank to 10 stories, and there is a distinct possibility of it shrinking further still. The parking variance has shrunk from 25 to 18 spaces too.

The January 5 hearing was abruptly canceled, as was the first hearing on December 1. Now it is scheduled for early March. Watch for further changes, perhaps drastic—rumor has it that the Planning Department has told the developer to redesign, cut off some height, and cut back farther into the cliffs.

This last idea represents a real danger to the cliff. The excavations for the present foundation would go West into the hill 100 feet and down into the hill 80 feet. Setting the building into this hole would not only damage the cliff beyond repair but also effectively eliminate that portion of the cliff from open space forever, to say nothing of the supposed “open space” behind the building. The lot is now part bare rock, very crumbly, and part landscaped by neighbors Davies, De Laet, and Klussman.

At present 1171 Sansome would dump 18 cars into parking Area A; we hope to reduce this to zero and think we might succeed. It is our position that the builder of a new project has the responsibility to house all the cars the Code demands for that size building.

The THD have retained a soils mechanic to advise us. Dr. David Rogers has experience with the Sierra Club and with the eastern cliffs of the Hill. On December 28 he rappelled off Calhoun Terrace onto the lot, did a geologic survey, and presented his findings

and advice. He was present at hearings with the developer, Tai Associates and Tai's engineers, Dames and Moore, and was ready to testify at the January 5 hearing.

This is probably the first time a neighborhood group has challenged a developer and the EIR process in such a positive way.

Additional pressures have come from the large number of people concerned with this

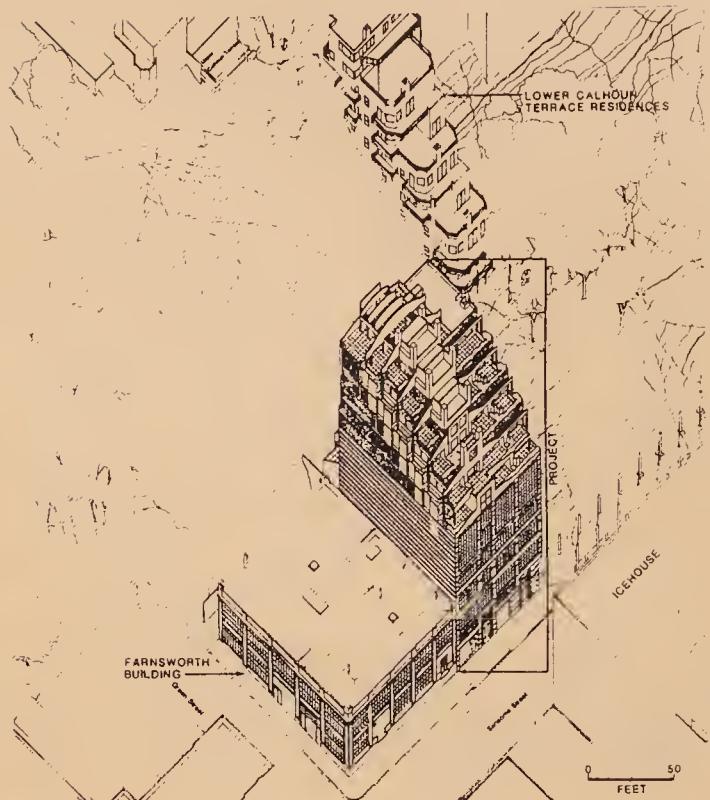


Dr. Rogers surveying 1171 Sansome St.

project. We have met with Tai several times. About two dozen letters opposing the project now stuff the file at the Planning Department. Over 30 people showed up in opposition at the Planning Commission on December 1. The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board voted 5-2 against such a building appearing in the Northeast Waterfront Historic District, while a delegation of a dozen Dwellers and others offered encouragement.



Original project of 12 stories.



We hope the Planning Commission is finally getting the message.

Most of the work and time put in on 1171 Sansome will be useful for our long-term goal of landmarking the whole cliff. The geologic findings are informative, and Dr. Rogers' report to us can be used as a basis from which to build our case. The City Attorney's office is still delaying its decision of the legality of landmarking any piece of land in the city, even though it was passed by the Landmarks Board over a year ago.

The next episode in this exciting story will be continued at the Planning Commission hearing in March. Stay with us. Support us. Come to the hearing. Write letters. **SAVE THE CLIFFS.**



The History of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers

Living on Telegraph Hill requires a certain determination, perhaps even obstinacy. To those who do, the benefits are great—walk to work, views of the Bay, neighbors who care, neighborhood businesses, social diversity. But preservation of those qualities of life in this unique neighborhood on the edge of the financial district has been an uphill battle for decades.

In 1944 residents banded together to initiate the forty-foot height limit in this area, long before it existed elsewhere. Only because of that is Telegraph Hill still physically visible from across the Bay, unlike other San Francisco hills, which have disappeared below gray monoliths.

In 1954 the Municipal Railway tried to drastically cut the Telegraph Hill local bus service, the #39. Citizens of the area loudly protested, and service was restored. Having won the battle of the bus, they then determined to form a permanent organization, the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. The prime instigators included such well-known rabble rousers as Fred and Clarice Meyer, Raymond Theill,

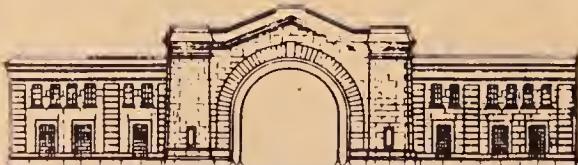
Bob and Vera Ransom

- (a) Married from 21 Alta Street 1944
- (b) Tenants 23 years at 24 Alta
- (c) Being evicted by new owner
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Dennis Flynn, Pat Carson and Nancy Katz. The general purposes were, as they are now, to beautify and preserve Telegraph Hill and to make it a better place to live. Projects have been varied and numerous, from tree planting, placing utility wires underground, preserving height limits, installing traffic controls, and improving relations with city officials, as well as holding neighborhood parties and meetings and improving parks.

Over the years the organization has become known as the most powerful neighborhood group in San Francisco. That reputation and the group's success has been the result of hard work of many volunteers over the past twenty-nine years.

In 1956 powerful forces in "redevelopment" called the area "blighted" and recommended that highrise apartments replace the variety of well-loved, small-scale apartment buildings. THD members scrounged up a sound truck and broadcast the news through the streets in Italian, English and Chinese. Seven hundred anxious residents turned out at a neighborhood meeting to hear the redevelopment plan. Having heard of the project, Mayor George Christopher gave his support to the hill residents and the redevelopment scheme was tabled.

A month later, another developer proposed an eleven-story apartment. This threat spurred the Hill Dwellers to extend the forty-foot

(continued on page 17)

The image contains three distinct restaurant logos arranged vertically:

- Buon Gusto Salame Factory:** A circular logo featuring a stylized salami slice. The text "ITALIAN DRY SALAME" is at the top, "THE LAST NORTH BEACH" is in the center, and "SALAME FACTORY" is at the bottom. Below the logo, the address "535 GREEN STREET, SAN FRANCISCO" and phone number "421-3765 986-5212" are listed.
- Basta Pasta:** An oval logo depicting a man eating pasta with a fork and knife. The word "BASTA PASTA" is written in large, decorative, serif capital letters across the bottom of the oval.
- North Beach Restaurant:** A circular logo featuring a silhouette of Italy surrounded by grapevines. The text "NORTH BEACH" is at the top, "LUNCH • DINNER" is in the center, and "RESTAURANT" is at the bottom. Below the logo, the text "Cucina Toscana", "The finest meats, vegetables, fish and cheeses", "Pasta made fresh daily", "1512 STOCKTON STREET, SAN FRANCISCO", "392-1587 • 392-1700", "open 7 days", and "VALET PARKING" are listed. At the bottom, the text "FRESH HOMEMADE PASTA AND FRESH FISH FROM OUR OWN BOAT" is displayed.

At the very bottom, the address "Vallejo and Grant Avenue" and phone number "434-2248" are listed, along with the operating hours "Open 7 Days - Dining - 11:30 am to 2:00 am".

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height limit from Union Street south to near Broadway.

As San Francisco began to sprout more high-rises in the late 50's and 60's, the Telegraph Hill Dwellers' activities increased. An important battle was lost, despite a sit-in, when the 115-year-old Seawall Warehouse was demolished to make way for the International Market Center development. The war was won, however, when the International Market Center, an immense project that would have surrounded Telegraph Hill like a crate, was stopped by a lawsuit.

The automobile has presented a constant challenge to people living in this area. Much of the area was built on tiny lots, and many homes lack garages. In addition, tourists from all over the world, diners in North Beach and commuters to the financial district all seek to park their cars on the few narrow streets of Telegraph Hill and North Beach. Efforts of THD to grapple with the problems have ranged from support for building and enlargement of the Vallejo Street garage, developing diagonal parking on the streets, initiating the Residential Parking system, encouraging development of shuttle buses to restaurants and so on.

(to be continued in next issue)



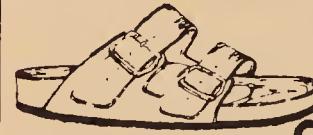
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Planning and Zoning Issues

By Judy Robinson

The Dwellers have been active in many important battles in recent months and have had several victories and some defeats.

Interim Zoning—A major victory was the support of the Planning Commission for much of the neighborhood organizations' position on new interim zoning laws. On January 5, the commission recommended that the Board of Supervisors approve planning code amendments meeting many of the neighborhood coalitions objectives: allowing such groups to seek zoning changes; putting specific time limits on interim zoning (like that in place currently in North Beach); tightening the law with respect to developers' ability to go forward after "interim" zoning is in place. The Dwellers supported the commission's recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The matter is pending before the board's Planning, Housing and Development Committee.

Financial Institutions—Another major victory was the Board's extension of a moratorium on new financial institutions in North Beach. On January 3, the board approved the ban for one year. But the moratorium did not stop four more savings and loans situated on the periphery of the moratorium area, where there currently are 13 financial institutions. One institution was planned for 1318 Stockton Street (the property is now for sale); another was to be located at the corner of Lombard and Columbus; a third was located at Chestnut and Columbus; and a fourth was located at 228 Columbus, half a block outside both the North Beach and Chinatown moratoria areas. The issue generated considerable publicity.

1000 Front Street (Embarcadero Terraces)—A four-story office building is planned at the foot of Telegraph Hill, replacing a 304-space parking lot. The developers are seeking a parking variance to allow only 50 spaces for the project. The Dwellers oppose the variance. The project is undergoing Environmental Review by the Planning Department, which has raised concerns about the present design.

1620 Montgomery Street—Another major project planned below the hill is a 90-foot commercial office building to be located in the 1907 Del Monte Milling Company buildings at Montgomery and Lombard. The Dwellers asked that an environmental review be required for the project and also requested discretionary review of it. The department agreed to grant discretionary review, but did not request an EIR. The Dwellers objected to the project on grounds that it would increase commercial density in an area that the City Master Plan says should have mixed uses.

725 Greenwich Street—A court appeal resulted in the go-ahead for construction of an office building opposite the North Beach playground, although the project had been rejected by both the City Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors as violating the residential-commercial zoning in the area. The project also extended above the 40-foot height limit with a large “mechanical penthouse.” The Dwellers asked the Planning Department for a history of the project, to ascertain whether it met code requirements. As of press time, the department had not responded. However, it appears that the project meets code requirements.

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292 Union Street—The Dwellers objected to a variance sought for construction of a glass greenhouse to enclose existing stairs and terraces, extending onto the sidewalk. The building already juts 6-10 feet beyond other buildings in the area. As of press time, the variance had not been granted.

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Board Of Directors' Report

Motions Passed—June 21, 1983

To lend THD's name and support to obtain funding for the planning and improvements for the tots' play yard at the North Beach Playground.

To oppose Gateway Savings & Loan's plan to locate at 990 Columbus Avenue based on the aggregate effect of additional financial institutions raising rents and forcing out more essential neighborhood-serving businesses.

To oppose Supervisor Kopp's proposed amendment to Sections 302 and 306.6 of the City Planing Code with all the resources available.

To oppose the variance request to subdivide the property at 215 Francisco Street.

To send a letter to Mr. Passmore asking for definitive information regarding the status

of our rezoning action by the DCP and a commitment of staff to initiate the process.

To oppose the variances being sought by the developer of 1171 Sansome with regard to parking and transfers of development rights.

To extend an advance of \$500 to promote our booth at the San Francisco Fair; such a sum to be spent at the discretion of the Executive Committee after reasonable efforts have been made to meet our needs through donations.

To lend support for the establishment of a coalition to support the North Beach rezoning effort, encourage representation from the THD on the coalition committee, and support establishment of a coalition letterhead.

Motions Passed—September 21, 1983

To have President Winslow investigate a

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contribution to Coit Tower demonstration, and, at Jane's discretion, authorize a \$100 contribution.

To send minutes with the agenda for each month's meeting.

To authorize the purchase of a good quality microphone, not to exceed \$400.

To underwrite up to \$500 to the clean-up campaign to be held on Oct. 22 in North Beach (if monies are needed).

To send a letter supporting the compromise Great Highway realignment to the Coastal Commission.

Motions Passed—November 15, 1983

To offer a gratuity of \$250 to the staff of Julius Castle for the annual cocktail party.

To authorize the editor of the Semaphore to hire help during the production, not to exceed \$250, for labor.

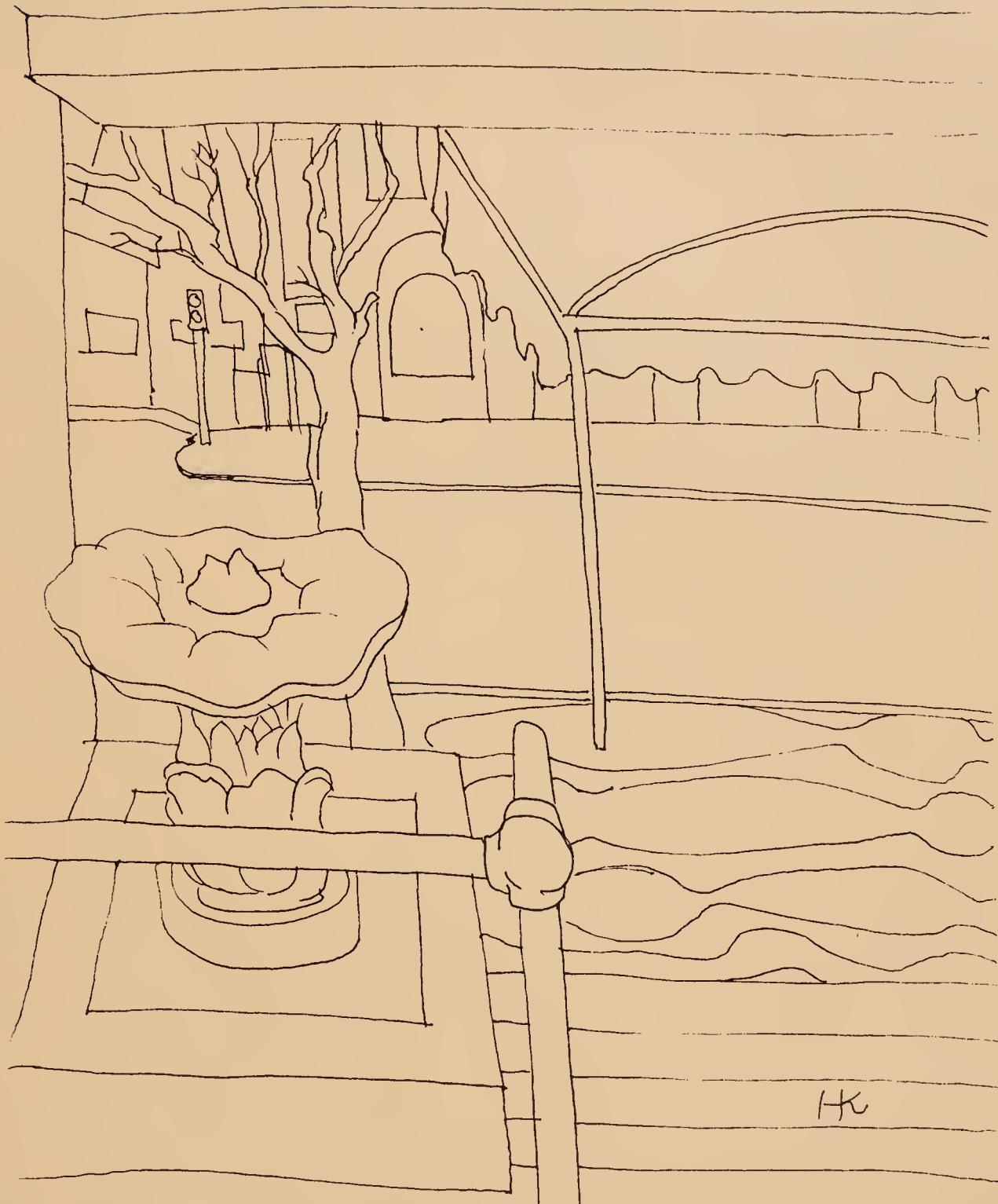
To endorse the concept of Planning Department's opposition to Supervisor Kopp's zoning interim amendment.

Motions Passed—January 17, 1984

To accept the Planning Staff recommendation of a 2,500 sq. ft. limit for businesses with conditional use. Height limit recommended is 40 ft. even on the south side of Broadway.

To oppose parking beneath Washington Square and North Beach Playground and recommend that any new parking facility in our area be studied with extreme care with conditional use as a requirement.

To contribute a sum of \$100 to Ken Maley's Coit Tower event.



First person to identify the THD Mystery Spot of the Month wins 2 cocktails at the next dinner meeting. Send your answer to THD, PO Box 330159, SF, CA 94133.

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